

IN THE CLAIMS

Claims 1-27. (canceled)

Claim 28. (new) A content server for distributing upgraded content data, comprising:

a network interface for receiving an upgrade request from a user for content data previously downloaded by the user from the content server as base data of a first format; wherein the upgrade request specifies a target format of a higher quality than the first format;

a storage unit having a user-related information section for checking user-related information of the base data previously downloaded by the user;

an upgrading-data generating unit for generating upgrading data of the content data to upgrade the previously downloaded base data of the first format to the target format; and

the network interface transmitting the upgrading data to the user in response to the upgrade request.

Claim 29. (new) The content server according to claim 28, wherein the base data includes a header comprising content-grade identification information indicating the first format.

Claim 30. (new) The content server according to claim 28, wherein the higher quality is at least one of a higher sampling frequency and a higher bit rate of the content data.

Claim 31. (new) A personal terminal for the playback of content data, comprising:

a network interface for sending an upgrade request to a content server for content data previously downloaded by a user as base data of a first format and receiving upgrading data of the content data in response; wherein the upgrade request specifies a target format of a higher quality than the first format;

a content-data combining unit for combining the upgrading data with the previously downloaded base data, whereby the base data is upgraded to the target format; and

an audio-signal processing unit for playback of the upgraded base data having the target format.

Claim 32. (new) The content server according to claim 28, wherein the base data includes a header comprising content-grade identification information indicating the first format.

Claim 33. (new) The content server according to claim 28, wherein the higher quality is at least one of a higher sampling frequency and a higher bit rate of the content data.

Claim 34. (new) A method of distributing upgraded content data, comprising the steps of:

receiving an upgrade request from a user for content data previously downloaded as base data of a first format from a server; wherein the upgrade request specifies a target format of a higher quality than the first format;

checking user-related information in the server of the base data previously downloaded by the user;

generating upgrading data of the content data to upgrade the previously downloaded base data of the first format to the target format; and

transmitting the upgrading data to the user in response to the upgrade request.